



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS Greensboro Strong Cities Strong Communities (SC2) Challenge under the EDA SC2 Initiative

Deadline for Registering Letters of Intent: 4:00 pm EDT, February 28, 2014
Deadline for Submittals: 4:00 pm EDT, April 15, 2014

INTRODUCTION

The City of Greensboro has been selected by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) to participate in the Strong Cities Strong Communities (SC2) Challenge. The SC2 Challenge is part of the Strong Cities Strong Communities (SC2) Initiative, which is aimed at creating new partnerships between federal agencies and localities, to spark economic development in regions that have faced significant long-term economic challenges. The EDA is working with cities across the country to administer a series of prize competitions. Citizens are invited to submit strategies for revitalizing local economies, and SC2 grant funds will be awarded to those individuals or teams that articulate the best path to long-term prosperity. Winning solutions must match the needs of Greensboro and its wider economy, offer a *feasible* roadmap toward implementation and represent *innovative* perspectives that will drive strong economic outcomes. The SC2 Challenge is designed to ensure an open, transparent and fair process of participation. Local leaders will select and reward the best approaches for addressing the community's real economic challenges with plans that are ready for rapid implementation.

Greensboro's SC2 Challenge is structured in two phases:

Phase One starts with a Request for Proposals (RFP), through which the City invites proposals from individuals, private consultants, and non-profit organizations, including those collaborating in multi-disciplinary teams, to prepare a comprehensive economic development strategy that will accelerate job growth and business expansion in the greater Greensboro economy. A total of up to \$100,000 in cash prizes will be awarded to the three most highly-rated proposals, based on the reviews of all submissions by a local Evaluation Panel.

Phase Two involves preparation of complete Economic Development Plans by up to six finalists, selected at the conclusion of Phase One. The team that submits the winning Economic Development Plan will receive up to \$1,000,000 as an award for delivering the best strategy, one that can be implemented quickly and show lasting impact.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Proposals must be submitted by 4:00 pm EDT on April 15, 2014. Any party interested in submitting a proposal must register with a Letter of Intent by 4:00 pm EDT on February 28, 2014. The one-page Letter of Intent should include the name of the lead participant and any team members involved in the proposal, present the "theme" of your proposed economic development strategy and describe the discrete project that exemplifies the proposed strategy. Proposals submitted without a prior Letter of Intent will not be accepted. Proposals received after the deadline will not be accepted.

Proposals and Letters of Intent should be sent by email to SC2@greensboro-nc.gov. Please direct all questions or comments regarding this RFP to the same email, or call Prince Gaither-Eli at (336) 373-7573. The City accepts no responsibility for problems encountered during the submittal process.

Detailed instructions and guidelines for the content of proposals are presented on the pages that follow.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

Welcome to Phase One of the SC2 Challenge. Over the next six months, you are invited to develop and submit an Economic Development Proposal (Proposal) to the City of Greensboro SC2 Challenge. Proposals will be based on a comprehensive understanding of local, regional, and global economic issues and will aim to foster long-term economic development, job creation, and community prosperity.

Proposals submitted in Phase One will be reviewed and scored by a local Evaluation Panel. Based on the scoring of the Evaluation Panel, the City will award up to \$100,000 in cash prizes. The top three ranked Proposals are eligible to win the following:

- **\$55,000** (First Place)
- **\$35,000** (Second Place)
- **\$10,000** (Third Place)

Instructions

There are two required sections and one optional section of your Proposal.

In order to submit a Proposal, you must comply with the Terms and Conditions of the SC2 Challenge, which are available on the City's SC2 website. By participating you are confirming that your Proposal will be unencumbered by rights of intellectual property and may be retained and used at the City's discretion.

The three sections of your Proposal allow you to cross reference your materials. You should provide summary explanations in some sections with references to more detailed information contained in other sections. Understand that we anticipate receiving many Proposals, and you are asked to distinguish yourself by provoking greater interest in your ideas. You should plan to offer compelling and succinct presentations that will lead judges to read more or to dig deeper into the details of your Proposal. Further, the judging criteria are heavily weighted to reward substance over style. A well articulated presentation is important, but you need to focus on describing solutions with cutting-edge concepts that could be applied to address economic development challenges faced by the City of Greensboro.

The City expects many participants. If your Proposal is selected as a finalist, then you may be invited to participate in Phase Two of the SC2 Challenge, when you will be competing against a smaller set of up to six finalists for a larger award of up to \$1,000,000. During Phase Two each invited finalist will expand upon its Proposal and develop a more comprehensive Economic Development Plan (Plan).

Your Proposal should aim toward two critical objectives. First, you will showcase your talent and potential for advancing to Phase Two. Judges want to know that you are capable of developing a more sophisticated Plan. Second, you must include at least one discreet Economic Development Project (Project) within your proposal. The Project needs to reflect and represent your overall strategy, and it needs to provide sufficient detail, so that the City may consider it as one of many potential future concepts. Your Project needs to be practical and make sense within your larger Proposal. It needs to show that you are aware of cost

implications and other concrete challenges, such as when the City could expect a return on the investment. When developing your Proposal, lead with a clear demonstration of your capabilities and showcase your talent by delivering a compelling and concrete example of your proposed recommendations. Plans and high-priority areas that the City considers foundations and building blocks for future economic development are found in Attachment 1.

SECTION 1: Executive Summary

You are required to submit a summary of no more than five pages that highlights your major points and the specific Project. Your Executive Summary should cover the points outlined below succinctly and then expand upon them in the full body of your Proposal (see Section 2).

- I. Demonstrate that you have investigated regional and local economic development conditions by linking your recommendations to a broader understanding of those trends, particularly any that you feel would support your proposed solutions.
- II. Provide a broad but compelling description of your general economic development strategy – explain why your approach is both innovative and practical; offer why and how you’ve adopted a particular approach.
- III. Outline a proposed Project that best embodies your strategic approach. Offer context and explain how the Project is emblematic of an effective overarching proposed set of recommendations.
 - a. Be specific – describe how and when the Project will yield a net return on the investment and focus on why the Project may represent other related proposed activities.
 - b. Be accountable – identify where there may be a need for further development of the Project and offer a clear description of a pathway for resolving any outstanding issues. You may include concepts that may require more work, so long as you demonstrate an ability to overcome challenges and resolve any threats to the proposed Project.
 - c. Be bold – offer new and inventive ideas. Audacity counts, so long as it is rooted in sound economic principles and an understanding of the related risks and return for adopting your ideas.
- IV. Select the measure of your success. Whether you’re counting jobs or some other return on investment, make sure that you have modeled what and why you’ve chosen a particular metric or set of measures. Be as quantifiable as you can be.

NOTE: *Since the Executive Summary is limited to five pages, it is essential that you reference or link to more sophisticated analysis and explanation that can be provided in the full body of the Proposal (See Section 2).*

You will submit your Executive Summary as a PDF file, the only file type that will be accepted. Your proposal will be rejected if the Executive Summary exceeds five pages.

SECTION 2: Economic Development Proposal

This is your opportunity to showcase your level of effort or the depth of your research and investigation. The main body of your Proposal should not exceed twenty-five pages (including any appendices). The purpose of the main body of the Proposal is to provide a deeper set of explanations and copy from which you should cite references in the Executive Summary. You are welcome to include graphic illustrations of your findings, such as tables and figures. Those may be displayed however you feel is most appropriate. The full body of your Proposal will also include other detailed information following this outline:

- I. Identify any team members (or yourself, if you are the sole participant); let us know who you are and your most credible accomplishments. It is acceptable represent qualifications that are not typically associated with economic development. A broad diversity of expertise is welcome.
- II. Publish your detailed analysis of regional and local economic conditions and trends; substantiate any claims made in the Executive Summary which would lend greater depth to your understanding of those issues.
- III. Declare your broad strategic approach, including a justification and reasoning for using proposed tactics; base them upon your previous analysis. Include a brief description of the economic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (i.e., “SWOT”) that have been considered. It is important to realize potential threats to your Proposal, but focus on your ability to address or overcome them. The SWOT framework is a preferred method of analysis, if you are invited to participate in the second round; show that you can use it.
- IV. Describe your proposed Project in detail. Offer an explanation for why it embodies your larger strategy, why you have chosen it to showcase your capabilities, what it may offer or any other considerations.
 - a. Include a description of the resource requirements to advance the Project. You are strongly encouraged to include draft budgets and explanations for any assumed expenses and/or other implied costs. Here you are showcasing your ability to be concrete, to recognize practical limitations and to propose solutions that will demonstrate a focus on efficiency.
 - b. Explain how the Project will generate net benefits; at what point will the investment “pay off” for the City? How? Why? When? If it is relevant, you may include an explanation for how the proposed Project may scale or expand to include other projects.
- V. Measure or project any intended outcomes. Adopt a system of metrics that allow you to focus on any or all of the following questions:
 - a. How will your Proposal impact industries and occupations (either growing or declining) and why?
 - b. What is the net impact on job retention and creation; why?

- c. Where will your Proposal have the greatest impact (declining or growing areas) and why?
 - d. When will the Proposal generate a net positive impact on the City and why? Please look at both near term (under 4 years) and long-term (beyond nine years) timelines for making an impact.
 - e. Taking into consideration the regional economy and economies of adjacent cities, consider how the Proposal will both utilize those strengths and/or help to resolve those conditions, as well.
- VI. Conclude with your most ambitious view for the future of the City, should your Proposal be adopted, and why your strategic approach is critical to realizing that vision.

You will submit the full body of your Proposal as a PDF file, the only file type that will be accepted. If the full body of your proposal exceeds twenty-five (25) pages, it will be rejected.

SECTION 3: Video Presentation (Optional)

Each Proposal may include a short video presentation of between two and five minutes. When developing your video presentation, plan to cover the core elements in your Executive Summary. It is important that video presentations emphasize substance over style, focussing on producing a sincere and thoughtful message.

You may upload your video presentation in any of the approved format types:

- WebM files: Vp8 video codec and Vorbis Audio codecs
- .MPEG4, 3GPP and MOV files: Typically supporting h264, mpeg4 video codecs, and AAC audio codec
- .AVI: Many cameras output this format - typically the video codec is MJPEG and audio is PCM
- .MPEGPS: Typically supporting MPEG2 video codec and MP2 audio
- .WMV
- .FLV: Adobe-FLV1 video codec, MP3 audio

Attachment 1: Plans and Projects that Provide a Foundation for Greensboro's SC2 Challenge

Parties preparing proposals for the SC2 Challenge are urged to review the plans and projects listed below as they shape their proposals.

- ***The Greensboro Partnership 2012 Strategic Plan***

<http://www.greensboropartnership.com/pdf/StrategicPlan2012.pdf>

This plan aims to transform Greensboro from a basic manufacturing to a strong knowledge-based economy. It identifies 26 specific strategies and tactics to implement seven key initiatives: (1) A targeted industry cluster focus, (2) Higher education assets, (3) Greensboro Center City Development, (4) Excellence in K-12 education, (5) Government relations, (6) Entrepreneurship, and (7) Economic Vitality and Quality of Life.

- ***Greensboro Downtown Economic Development Strategy***

<http://downtowngreensboro.net/invest/development-strategy>

This strategy identifies three goals: (1) Generate returns to the public sector to include sales and property taxes, (2) Attract providers of high-quality jobs, and (3) Strengthen Greensboro's brand. The strategy suggests building upon key corridors entering the city, leading to the downtown and connective sites. Six priority projects are identified: (1) Complete phase I of the Downtown Greenway, (2) Incentivize quality new mixed-use development, (3) Activate downtown's unique historic building stock, (4) Encourage connectivity through a comprehensive streetscape program, (5) Create a signature performing arts center, and (6) Support a knowledge community by encouraging colleges and universities to locate programs downtown.

- ***Balanced Economic Development: A Strategic Plan for East Greensboro***

<http://www.greensboro-nc.gov/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentID=15298>

This plan identifies three critical areas of focus: (1) the City's increased poverty rate; (2) the decline in home values and the shift from homeownership to rental; and (3) the need to improve the performance of Greensboro's public schools. Recommendations aim to improve parity in east Greensboro with four major thrusts: (1) increasing the number of households in the area; (2) increasing the median household income; (3) improving road access; and (4) increasing support for the area's public schools.

- ***The Connections 2025 Comprehensive Plan***

<http://www.greensboro-nc.gov/index.aspx?page=1732>

This broader planning document sets four economic development goals: (1) Promoting a healthy, diversified economy with a strong tax base and opportunities for employment, entrepreneurship for all segments of the community, including underserved areas such as East Greensboro; (2) Targeting city investment and regulatory policies for economic development; (3) Ensuring that city land use policies and regulations allow for an adequate supply of land to accommodate economic development; and (4) Building partnerships with other entities on economic development issues.

- ***The Consolidated Plan 2010-2014: Plan for a Resilient Community***

<http://www.greensboro-nc.gov/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=8527>

This five-year plan incorporates the six Livability Principles established by the Federal Interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities, including the general principle of enhancing economic

competitiveness with goals intended to (1) Coordinate/integrate job training into long and short range planning; (2) Capitalize on Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) and other institutional strengths in the community; and (3) Provide opportunities for job training, mentoring, education and job creation.

City Priorities for Catalytic Projects

This Request calls for proposals to include a discrete project that reflects and embodies your strategic approach. The City considers the following as priority ‘building blocks’ for advancing the local and regional economy:

- Capitalizing on the universities and colleges in the greater Greensboro community and high-impact collaborations between these institutions and the private sector
- Attracting people, businesses, and investment in the downtown area
- Enhancing the arts and other quality of life features
- Improving the impact of Piedmont Triad International Airport and airport area infrastructure
- Workforce Development
- Advanced Manufacturing

Ideas posted at www.Greensboroldeas.com

Other ideas and potential projects suggested by citizens and community groups throughout Greensboro are posted on the City’s Economic Catalyst website: <http://www.greensboroldeas.com/> This site is intended to serve as a community forum, a place for people and organizations to propose ideas and engage in open conversations about these ideas for improving the city’s economic vitality.